

**NORTH AREA COMMITTEE**

13 November 2023

6.30 - 9.40 pm

**Present**

**Area Committee Members:** Councillors Todd-Jones (Chair), Carling (Vice-Chair), Bird, Gawthrope Wood, Hossain, Sheil, Smart, Swift, Wade, Bird, Black and Meschini

**Officers:**

Public Realm Engineering & Project Delivery Team Leader: John Richards

Project Leader: James Ogle

Anti-Social Behaviour Officer: Sarah Steggles

Committee Manager: Sarah Steed

Meeting Producer: Boris Herzog

**Other Officers in Attendance:**

Police Sergeant: Alice Jeffery

Business Development Director from Stagecoach: David Boden

Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Senior Delivery Project Manager:  
Thomas Porter

Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Senior Project Manager: Kerry Allen

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL****23/23/NAC Welcome, Introduction and Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Divkovic, Gilderdale, Thittala-Varkey and County Councillor Rae.

**23/24/NAC Declarations Of Interest**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Interest</b>
23/29/NAC	Carling	Was the Executive Councillor who would make the final decision regarding the Environmental Improvement Programme.

**23/25/NAC Notes of previous meeting**

The notes of the meeting held on 7 September 2023 were noted.

### **23/26/NAC Open Forum**

Lilian Rundblad advised that sale proceeds from the book 'A Community Remembers Histon Road' would be issued as grants to the Meadows Children and Family Wing and the Kings Hedges Family Support Project. Further funding was still available.

### **23/27/NAC Stagecoach - Bus A route**

David Boden the Business Development Director from Stagecoach attended the meeting to speak about the Bus A route in Cambridge and made the following points:

- i. A lot of work had been done to try and build passenger numbers following the Covid pandemic. Passenger levels were at 89%.
- ii. The 'A route' bus had to be a single decker bus due to the low bridge south of the railway station.
- iii. There had been challenges due to driver availability, but these had been overcome.
- iv. It was not straight forward to simply add an additional bus into a route – costs needed to be covered.
- v. The 8A service meant Histon Road had a 15-minute bus service into town.
- vi. Noted the A service sometimes was not able to stop on Histon Road as the buses were full coming off Orchard Park.
- vii. Noted that people on Histon Road wanted to travel into the city centre or to Addenbrookes.
- viii. The closure of the southern section of the busway had a profound impact on the viability of the busway. Two extra buses had been put into the cycle to operate the busway as buses now had to come down Hills Road.
- ix. Until the southern section of the busway was re-opened no further buses could be put into the cycle. Acknowledged the impact on residents having to walk to Akeman Street following Stagecoach's decision to reduce the number of stops on Histon Road.

Members of the public asked questions as set out below.

1. Since the change of route for the A bus on 3 September 2023, the residents along Histon Road have been quite upset and unhappy with the situation especially by Brownlow Road and Carisbrooke Road Bus

stops. The residents are dependent on the A bus for their visits to Addenbrookes, daily or weekly as well as the outbound route for their jobs in St Ives.

When GCP planned and constructed the Histon Road project for walking, cycling and bus priority, it became evident that the bus was given priority with a new bus lane and floating bus stops in the northern part which led to too narrow pavements of less than 1 meter and less than standard width for the cycle lanes. Instead, residents were promised that the guided bus would stop at bus stops along Histon Road for residents to be able to reach the station and Addenbrookes in one go. This happened and for some months residents were finally enjoying the long-awaited bus connection.

Since then, residents have had a very unreliable service at the only Histon Road bus stop by Akeman Street. The bus has been cancelled, or it has been full and not stopping. Trying to travel from Jesus Lane outbound – the bus was already full and the next one cancelled. Often all 3 Stagecoach buses A, 8 and 8A arrive at the same time and then there is a very long wait until the next opportunity. The time information at the bus stop for the A bus did not work on 7 October.

Residents along Histon Road request that Stagecoach immediately reviews the route for the A bus and reinstates the Brownlow Road and Carisbrooke Road bus stops for the A bus.

The Stagecoach representative responded:

- i. Decisions to remove bus stops were not taken lightly.
- ii. Noted there was a difference between punctuality and reliability. Reliability was within Stagecoach control. They provided the drivers and ran the service. Services had to be cancelled due to an unprecedented amount of roadworks which affected services. Sometimes these were with very little notice. The consequences of these works have made buses extremely late and made cancellations necessary to regulate the service.
- iii. Noted comments about buses arriving at the same time but unfortunately there was limited action which could be taken to help this.
- iv. Electronic timetables were managed by the County Council so would liaise with them about the Brownlow Road timetable.
- v. When the southern section of the busway was re-opened, bus arrangements could be reviewed.

2. Is there any potential for an increase in frequency for the bus A route during peak times to mitigate against the bus being regularly full and not letting passengers on?

An example from 9 November: Their son, a Long Road College student, waiting at the Akeman Street bus stop was not allowed to board the 9:30, 9:50 and 10:10 buses as they were full.

The Stagecoach representative responded:

- i. Unfortunately, it wasn't possible to add in an extra service without ensuring that that passenger numbers would cover the cost of running the service. When the southern section of the busway was re-opened, bus arrangements could be reviewed.

The Stagecoach representative made the following comments in response to questions from the Committee:

- i. The B route bus didn't traditionally stop on Milton Road, this only happened during the pandemic. Post pandemic there were other bus routes which took passengers from the city centre to Milton Road. The number 2 service did link up to Cambridge North train station. Stagecoach had to consider the needs of all users.
- ii. Stu Right and Danny Smith were the Stagecoach contacts for bus services on Milton Road.
- iii. The 'southern section of the busway' referred to the closure between the railway station and Addenbrookes which had been in place since January 2021. The impact of this closure meant that a lot of buses had to divert down Hills Road and then got stuck in traffic.
- iv. The Citi1 bus route was the busiest bus route in Cambridge and had over 150,000 passengers per month. Stagecoach had recently been forced to cut the frequency of this service due to congestion and unplanned roadworks.
- v. Cam Bus Limited accounts and Stagecoach Group accounts were published online and publicly available via Companies House. Noted that Cam Bus Limited had reinvested 80% back into new buses.
- vi. Noted that 'request only' stops still had to be factored into journey times.
- vii. Would follow up discussions around the delays caused at Coldham's Lane roundabout / Sainsburys with Councillor Bird outside of the meeting.

## **23/28/NAC Policing and Safer Neighbourhoods NAC**

The Committee received a report regarding policing and safer neighbourhoods' trends.

The report outlined actions taken since the last reporting period. The current emerging issues / neighbourhood trends for each ward were also highlighted (see report for full details). Previous local areas of concern and engagement activity noted in the report were:

- i. Street based drug dealing, including cuckooing.
- ii. ASB and dangerous driving across the north of the city and NO2 canisters.
- iii. Cycle crime.
- iv. Youth and knife crime.

The Committee Manager read out the following public question on behalf of a member of the public:

- i. What action is being taken specifically to address frequent and persistent drug dealing in Histon Road Recreation ground? The same individual can be seen on an almost daily basis dealing drugs next to the children's play area. Had personally submitted eight reports of witnessing this activity in the last few weeks alone. No longer felt safe taking their children to the park.

Sergeant Jeffery advised that since the question was submitted in advance of the meeting Police Officers had reached out and spoken with the member of the public. It was noted that the information was being reported to the Police but their internal systems weren't directing it to the correct Police Team. Advised that this information was very useful in targeting resources. Histon Road and the recreation ground had been patrolled by the Police.

Members welcomed and supported the work of the Police and Anti-Social Behaviour Team. Members expressed concerns regarding:

- ii. Motorbikes speeding on Green End Road.
- iii. Drug dealing in East Chesterton.
- iv. Knife crime and youth work and sufficient officer capacity to cover this work.
- v. Key Police Officer contacts for Cuckooing.
- vi. Speeding in Gilbert Road.
- vii. Traffic Regulation Order enforcement at Garden Walk.

**23/29/NAC NAC Environmental Improvement Programme Project Submission Summary Report (2023) for Discussion**

The Committee received a report from the Project Leader regarding the Environmental Improvement Programme (EIP). The report outlined new suggested schemes for 2023/24.

It was noted that the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services would ultimately make the decision on which environmental improvement projects would be taken forward.

The Chair noted that the EIP projects highlighted as 'green' and 'green / amber' within Appendix B, Table 1 (column 'Cost Deliverability Eligible Rating') would be presented to the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services which could be taken forward expediently, subject to local consultation within the North Area Committee funding allocation available.

### **23/30/NAC Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Update on the Milton Road Project**

The Committee received an update on the Milton Road project from the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Senior Delivery Project Manager. Further information could be found via [Milton Road \(gretercambridge.org.uk\)](https://www.gretercambridge.org.uk).

Members of the public asked questions as set out below.

#### Question 1.

Was concerned over the lack of compensation available for traders who were severely impacted by the GCP Milton Road scheme.

Over-running on the original intended construction schedule had led to substantial losses for several traders on Milton Road. Some businesses had suffered these losses since July 2022. Customer parking bays were still not reinstated for the shops in vicinity of 36 Milton Road leading to all day commuter parking. Noted that if customers can't park, they won't stop. Losses were at a minimum of 20% of takings for most traders, some businesses had closed and changed hands. The once thriving Pod Orlem grocers' shop was facing closure. Confidential loss figures were provided at the meeting.

Traders were warned to expect 4 months of construction disruption for construction segments. Wanted to ask why compensation was not available to

those traders who suffered the extra 11 months of losses. Asked why funds were not available given that:

- a) The project team had experience of these kind of delays from Histon Road and could have been anticipated on the "risk pot".
- b) There was a contingency budget / risk pot to cover delays and increased costs as evidenced by FOIA **2127284** which detailed an increase in the GCP Board's approved budget of £24 million to £31.945 million. This was an average daily spend of £42,000.

The GCP Senior Project Delivery Manager said the following:

- i. Noted and sympathised with the concerns which had been raised.
- ii. The project had been predicted to take approximately 2 years to deliver, there had been some delays, but the project was generally on track.
- iii. Noted that there were difficulties with Cambridge Water at the southern end of Milton Road, which meant that works had taken a lot longer on the eastern side of Milton Road to what was expected.
- iv. The 30-minute parking bays had been suspended for the works to be undertaken. Traffic signs needed to be put back up and traffic regulation orders covered the parking bays. Hopefully this would assist with the parking issue.
- v. The GCP was an extension of the Highways Authority which could carry out improvements to the highway. They were not statutorily required to provide compensation to business owners.

The member of the public suggested that a hardship fund for cases where businesses could show financial loss because of the works should be provided. Also noted that cycle parking was being provided as suggested by the businesses.

The GCP Senior Project Delivery Manager advised that once the project was complete links for pedestrians and cyclists to the shops should be improved.

Councillor Meschini agreed to meet with the member of the public to discuss the compensation issue outside of the meeting.

Questions 2.

At the GCP Executive Board Meeting on 17 March 2022 the Director of Transport agreed to support the process of prioritising a residents' parking scheme to mitigate the loss of on-street parking planned for the southern section of the Milton Road re-development which was due to be completed next year. Following this a formal public consultation on the proposed Milton

Road Area Residents Parking Scheme was completed on 14 November 2022. One year later, no results had been published. The response from the County Council Governance Team to a Freedom of Information request stated that “the consultation analysis report is due to be presented to the GCP Executive Board and Cambridgeshire County Council’s Highways & Transport committees towards the end of this year.”

The final meeting of the GCP Executive Board was on 14 December. Asked councillors to confirm that this item would be on the Board’s agenda? If not, would they urge the GCP Director of Transport to include it?

The GCP Director of City Access Programme responded:

- i. Apologised that the residents parking scheme would be brought to the GCP Board later than anticipated, this was because of work with residents and councillors responding to feedback, which had taken slightly more time than planned.
- ii. Hoped to begin the statutory consultation on the Traffic Regulation Order before the end of 2023, which should help to be able to introduce the residents parking scheme.

Question 3.

Regarding parking arrangements outside the shops on Milton Road, opposite Westbrook Drive: It had been reported that the new parking bays resulting from the road redevelopment no longer had the 30-minute waiting restriction that was there previously. As a result, commuter cars were occupying the bays all day thus depriving the shops of customers who used to visit regularly. The independent grocery shop had experienced a 20% drop in turnover and was in danger of closure. Asked for something to be done urgently to rectify the situation? Asked if the shop could apply for compensation for loss of trade?

The Chair noted that the GCP Senior Project Delivery Manager had advised in response to a previous public question that the signs detailing parking restrictions at the southern end of Milton Road needed to be put back up so that enforcement of the traffic regulation order could take place.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Thanked GCP Officers for arranging visits with Milestone and WSP (contractors) who were undertaking the works on Milton Road.
- ii. Asked for lighting to be reviewed from 184 Milton Road onwards.
- iii. Expressed concern regarding the service area at Woodhead Drive particularly with regards to dust and noise.

- iv. Queried the number of cycle parking stands and if more could be provided.
- v. Noted access problems outside the care home towards the southern end of Milton Road.
- vi. Queried disabled parking provision.
- vii. Queried the width of pavements and cycleways.
- viii. Queried the tree species planted along Milton Road and whether trees would be damaged by double decker buses driving past.

The GCP Senior Project Delivery Manager responded:

- I. Had thought the lighting issue had been resolved but would pick up with the contractor the following day.
- II. The service area at Woodhead Drive was ideally located as it was in the middle of the project area. Had tried to mitigate noise and dust by installing fencing / hoarding, covering the spoil heaps and the generator had been removed from the area.
- III. Could talk to the designer again to see whether more cycle parking could be provided at Mitcham's Corner or closer to the shops at the southern end of Milton Road.
- IV. Acknowledged that access to the care home and hotel (on Milton Road) had been difficult due to the works being undertaken but both providers had been extremely accommodating.
- V. Confirmed that work was in progress regarding disabled parking bay provision.
- VI. The bollards outside the shops at Arbury Road were to be removed as they were creating an obstruction in the footpath. Remedial work to some of the footpaths would be undertaken by the contractor (Milestone).
- VII. Details regarding tree species planted along Milton Road were available via the GCP website.

### **23/31/NAC Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Waterbeach Greenway consultation**

The Committee received an update on the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Waterbeach Greenway consultation by the Senior Project Manager. Further information could be found via [Waterbeach Greenway \(greatercambridge.org.uk\)](https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk).

### **23/32/NAC Committee Action Sheet**

The Action Sheet was noted and an updated copy could be viewed at the following link under 'Committee Action Sheet – updated post committee.

[Agenda for North Area Committee on Monday, 13th November, 2023, 6.30 pm - Cambridge Council.](#)

The meeting ended at 9.40 pm

**CHAIR**